

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2022

The Hon. Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Hon. Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear President Biden and Secretary Austin,

As military veterans serving in the House of Representatives, we write out of deep concern for the current priorities displayed by the Department of Defense. The last two years have provided multiple examples of a “woke” culture that has permeated our military, including the service academies that are responsible for training our future warfighters. However, as stated in the House-passed FY23 NDAA, we firmly believe that lethality must be the centerpiece of our national defense strategy, not social experimentation. Any activities unrelated to enhancing lethality serve as potentially dangerous distractions from the DoD’s mission.

Last month, news reports detailed that the Air Force Academy has adopted diversity and inclusion practices in order accomplish their mission to “Develop Leaders of Character.” This included a slide presentation on which cadets are encouraged to use words such as “parents/caregivers/guardians” instead of “mom and dad,” and refrain from using terms such as “colorblind.” Additionally, last year it was revealed that cadets at West Point are receiving lectures based on critical race theory, including materials on the problems of “whiteness.”

It is certainly true that America is a diverse nation, and those who wear the uniform defending our country come from diverse backgrounds. That is as true today as it was when each of us served in the same uniforms. However, what is not true is that using words, such as “mom” or “dad,” which the Air Force Academy apparently no longer considers to be “inclusive language,” will detract from a cadet’s character or assist in shaping our future warfighters. In our view, woke culture undermines cohesiveness and uniformity by obsessing over racial, sexual, and religious differences. Institutionalizing this divisiveness will result in lower recruitment, low morale and a less lethal fighting force.

Furthermore, in March 2021 U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) selected Richard Torres-Estrada to serve in the newly created position of “Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.” Mr. Torres-Estrada was selected for this position despite having authored outrageous, offensive, and highly partisan politically-based social media posts – all publicly available – that went as far as comparing former President Donald Trump to Adolf Hitler, the man responsible for the extermination of millions of people, including six million Jews. Rather than promoting unity and readiness, the selection of Mr. Torres-

Estrada signifies an elevation of radical leftist politics at time when our nation stands deeply politically divided.

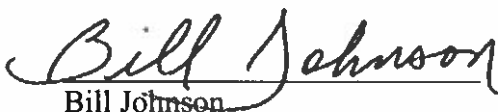
As you know, our men and women in uniform swear an oath to serve and defend our great nation and are prohibited from publicly expressing partisan political views. To subject our warriors to political indoctrination and social reengineering is inappropriate and divisive. As military veterans, we each swore the same oath to serve and protect this nation. While no longer in uniform, we care deeply for our men and women in uniform and still take that oath very seriously.

Now, as Members of Congress, on behalf of the American people we have a constitutionally mandated oversight role to perform. As such, we firmly believe our nation's Department of Defense's central mission is to prevent war by being the most powerful, lethal military force on the planet; and if prevention of war fails, to win any such conflict – all in order to defend the sovereignty of the United States and protect our national security interests around the world. Furthermore, we do not believe it is the mission of the DoD to politically indoctrinate our young people who willingly volunteer to serve our country.

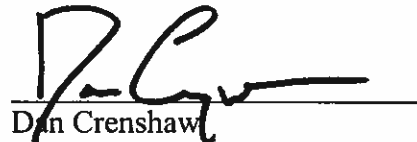
Therefore, in exercising our oversight role, Mr. President, we respectfully request a briefing on the priorities of our Department of Defense and the various service branches, including what actions are being taken to ensure this “woke” culture does not detract from the Department's most critical mission.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. We look forward to your responses.

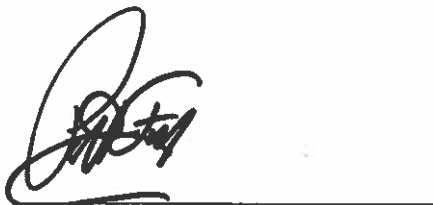
Sincerely,



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress




Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress




Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Mark E. Green, MD
Member of Congress

CC: General Mark A. Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Hon. Frank Kendall, Secretary of the U.S. Air Force; Hon. Christine Wormuth, Secretary of the U.S. Army; Hon. Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the U.S. Navy; General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., Chief of Staff for the Air Force; General James C. McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army; Admiral Michael M. Gilday, Chief of Staff of the Navy